

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 25, 2003 LB 608

taking full credit for it. I did it. I did it when the rural senators said the train is coming and we won't stand in front of it. I said I'll stand in front of the train and I'll derail it. It's inappropriate not to have an Agriculture Committee in Nebraska. And it's here. It stayed. And you know one of the things we were always discussing? These big meat packers who wanted to grow their own cattle and grow their own hogs, and the producers in Nebraska did not want that to be and they came to that Ag Committee and cried to me to stop these big companies from doing it. And I said, I will do everything I can to help these producers in the rural areas who said we don't want to be crushed out. If you let the big packers do it, they will set the market price. And they were not willing to let that artificially-set market price determine, but on this floor, when we're talking about people who have nothing to sell but their labor, to let that market determine what they're going to get. These business people should not be thanked for looking at an issue or an amendment. They should not own this Legislature, but they do. They mock us. They scoff. They laugh. What do you think they talk about when they go have their drinks? You think they're ever going to look at some senator on this floor and say he or she has done so much for the business community that we're going to name him king of Ak-Sar-Ben and the female senator queen of Ak-Sar-Ben? No. You are a water carrier. You are the common laborer, and when I use the word "common" I want it to be taken in a pejorative sense, not in the sense of the common people, meaning there are so many of them, and they have no voice, they have no power. They are divided, they are conquered, and they are exploited. And legislators can say \$8.25 is something that ought to be put into the law and we should be proud of it? That should be the mark of our shame. Nothing would be better than this, because when you do this affirmatively you are saying this is all those people are worth. When old Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, some guy in the gospels wrote, this is how they valued him. The poor, said the Book of Amos in the Old Testament, are sold for a pair of shoes. We talk about poor people. We talk about the need to set a floor below which no member of this society will be allowed to fall when it comes to sustenance. I'm sure some people go to church and talk about social justice. You all are prayed over every morning. But when time comes for us to act